

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, May 23, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. Alexandra Hotel, London, May 23, (1882) My dear Mrs. Bell:

I am quite ashamed of myself for not writing before, but have been very busy shopping for the next few months. When I get home I do not expect even to see the inside of a shop, at all events I shall try not to.

Alec is in Edinburgh today so I can not tell what he will say to the plan proposed in your and Mr. Bell's letter. For my own part I had rather keep his laboratory close to our house, but of course I don't know how he will feel about it. Alec is at Edinburgh on business and tomorrow goes to Greenock to prepare for his lecture next Saturday. He is very much disappointed that he has so little time for preparation after we have staid on a whole month for that express purpose, but it can not be helped and I think he will do very well after all for he made a very good beginning in Paris.

My little ones are very nicely and the people here think they have grown very much. If Elsie has grown into a big girl, little Daisy has stepped into her shoes and is now a very winning little girl with pretty, gentle ways, which however don't prevent her having a very strong will of her own. Elsie is rough in her strength, but most generous and loving in disposition, never so happy as when she is giving her toys to Daisy or when Daisy, having been naughty, announce that ?he "good now" and is kissed in consequence.

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London is not as pleasant as Paris, but is very nice all the same and the shops seem to me in their way as pretty or prettier than those of Paris. I want to go to the Academy very much, but shirk going alone and Miss Bell is rather young to accompany her mother yet.

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However I am not sure but that she will do so. I saw quite a number of very young ladies at the Paris Salon and they seemed to enjoy it. I was very much disappointed in the Salon, there seemed to be few fine pictures and of these, fewer still that were not either horrible subjects, indecent or portraits. The portraits were mostly very fine and showed how artistic is our present style of dress, for a painter could not have found anything more picturesque than the every-day costumes worn by these sitters. There were very few statues of merit and the prettiest portrait was by an American of Boston.

Mrs. Home we have seen several times lately, she seems quite worn out and far from well. Her children I have not seen. Mrs. Cathcart I have not called on yet, they live such a long way off. I am sorry that I shall not be able to see Mary's friend again as I have forgotten his address. Thank you for remembering my little girl's birthday. She did not forget you either, but received some little toy from Grandmamma Bell. She had some little French children to take tea with her and they enjoyed seeing some magic lantern pictures and a Punch and Judy show. This Punch and Judy was Alec's present to his children and he enjoys showing them as much as the little ones seeing. I suppose you have heard of Alec's monkeys. It was all Mr. Johnson's doing, Alec would never have been capable of buying them alone and two days of them 3 was enough, but having got them he thinks himself bound to keep them. And as Alec gave me a pretty little bracelet of pearls and diamonds I am bound over to keep the peace and say nothing. Don't you think we shall be quite a menagerie, especially as we talk of adding a dog to our establishment.

With ever so much love.

Au revoir, Mabel.